



Use of Force

300.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines on the reasonable use of force. While there is no way to specify the exact amount or type of reasonable force to be applied in any situation, every member of this department is expected to use these guidelines to make such decisions in a professional, impartial and reasonable manner.

Although this policy may refer to an officer, that section shall apply to any member that is authorized to carry out such action.

300.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Deadly force - Force reasonably anticipated and intended to create a substantial likelihood of causing death or very serious injury.

Force - The application of physical techniques or tactics, chemical agents or weapons to another person. It is not a use of force when a person allows him/herself to be searched, escorted, handcuffed or restrained.

Intermediate Force - The level of force necessary to compel compliance by a subject displaying aggressive resistance, which is neither likely nor intended to cause death.

Low Level Force - The level of control necessary to interact with a subject that is compliant or displaying passive or active resistance. This level of force is not intended to cause injury, or has a low-probability of causing injury.

300.2 POLICY

The use of force by law enforcement personnel is a matter of critical concern, both to the public and to the law enforcement community. Officers are involved on a daily basis in numerous and varied interactions and, when warranted, may use reasonable force in carrying out their duties.

Officers must have an understanding of, and true appreciation for, their authority and limitations. This is especially true with respect to overcoming resistance while engaged in the performance of law enforcement duties.

The Department recognizes and respects the value of all human life and dignity without prejudice to anyone. Vesting officers with the authority to use reasonable force and to protect the public welfare requires monitoring, evaluation and a careful balancing of all interests.

300.2.1 DUTY TO INTERCEDE

Any officer present and observing another officer using force that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable under the circumstances shall, when in a position to do so, intercede to prevent the use of unreasonable force. An officer who observes another employee use force

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that exceeds the degree of force permitted by law shall promptly report these observations to a supervisor.

300.3 USE OF FORCE

Officers have the ability to impact the direction and outcome of many situations they handle, based on their decision making and tactics they choose to employ. Officers shall use only that amount of force that reasonably appears necessary given the facts and circumstances perceived by the officer at the time of the event to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement purpose.

The reasonableness of force will be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene at the time of the incident. Any evaluation of reasonableness must allow for the fact that officers are often forced to make split-second decisions about the amount of force that reasonably appears necessary in a particular situation, with limited information and in circumstances that are tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving.

Given that no policy can realistically predict every possible situation an officer might encounter, officers are entrusted to use well-reasoned discretion in determining the appropriate use of force in each incident.

It is also recognized that circumstances may arise in which officers reasonably believe that it would be impractical or ineffective to use any of the tools, weapons or methods provided by the Department. Officers may find it more effective or reasonable to improvise their response to rapidly unfolding conditions that they are confronting. In such circumstances, the use of any improvised device or method must nonetheless be reasonable and utilized only to the degree that reasonably appears necessary to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement purpose.

While the ultimate objective of every law enforcement encounter is to avoid or minimize injury and nothing in this policy requires an officer to retreat or be exposed to possible physical injury before applying reasonable force, officers should recognize that they may withdraw to a position that is tactically more secure or allows them greater distance in order to consider or deploy a greater variety of force options.

If feasible, prior to using force, which carries a significant risk of serious injury, officers are recommended to give warning that such force may be used. If the warning is not feasible, officers should document why it was not practical to do so.

300.3.1 USE OF FORCE TO EFFECT AN ARREST

Any peace officer may use reasonable force to effect an arrest, to prevent escape or to overcome resistance. A peace officer who makes or attempts to make an arrest need not retreat or desist from his/her efforts by reason of resistance or threatened resistance on the part of the person being arrested; nor shall an officer be deemed the aggressor or lose his/her right to self-defense by the use of reasonable force to effect the arrest, prevent escape or to overcome resistance (Penal Code § 835a).

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300.3.2 FACTORS USED TO DETERMINE THE REASONABLENESS OF FORCE

When determining whether to apply force and evaluating whether an officer has used reasonable force, a number of factors should be taken into consideration, as time and circumstances permit.

These factors include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Immediacy and severity of the threat to officers or others.
- (b) The conduct of the individual being confronted, as reasonably perceived by the officer at the time.
- (c) Officer/subject factors (age, size, relative strength, skill level, injuries sustained, level of exhaustion or fatigue, and the number of officers available vs. subjects).
- (d) The effects of drugs or alcohol.
- (e) Subject's mental state or capacity.
- (f) Proximity of weapons or dangerous improvised devices.
- (g) The degree to which the subject has been effectively restrained and his/her ability to resist despite being restrained.
- (h) The availability of other options and their possible effectiveness.
- (i) Seriousness of the suspected offense or reason for contact with the individual.
- (j) Training and experience of the officer.
- (k) Potential for injury to officers, suspects and others.
- (l) Whether the person appears to be resisting, attempting to evade arrest by flight or is attacking the officer.
- (m) The risk and reasonably foreseeable consequences of escape.
- (n) The apparent need for immediate control of the subject or a prompt resolution of the situation.
- (o) Whether the conduct of the individual being confronted no longer reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to the officer or others.
- (p) Prior contacts with the subject or awareness of any propensity for violence.
- (q) Any other exigent circumstances.

300.3.3 PAIN COMPLIANCE TECHNIQUES

Pain compliance techniques may be effective in controlling a physically or actively resisting individual. Officers may only apply those pain compliance techniques for which they have successfully completed department-approved training. Officers utilizing any pain compliance technique should consider:

- (a) The degree to which the application of the technique may be controlled given the level of resistance.

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- (b) Whether the person can comply with the direction or orders of the officer.
- (c) Whether the person has been given sufficient opportunity to comply.

The application of any pain compliance technique shall be discontinued once the officer determines that compliance has been achieved.

300.3.4 CAROTID CONTROL HOLD

The proper application of the carotid control hold may be effective in restraining a violent or combative individual. However, due to the potential for injury, the use of the carotid control hold is subject to the following:

- (a) The officer shall have successfully completed department-approved training in the use and application of the carotid control hold.
- (b) The carotid control hold may only be used when circumstances perceived by the officer at the time indicate that such application reasonably appears necessary to control a person who is physically aggressive and exhibiting combative conduct.
- (c) The application of a carotid control hold on the following individuals should generally be avoided unless the totality of the circumstances indicates that other available options reasonably appear ineffective, or would present a greater danger to the officer, the subject or others, and the officer reasonably believes that the need to control the individual outweighs the risk of applying a carotid control hold:
 - 1. Females who are known to be pregnant;
 - 2. Elderly individuals;
 - 3. Obvious juveniles;
 - 4. Individuals who appear to have Down syndrome or who appear to have obvious neck deformities or malformations, or visible neck injuries.
- (d) Any individual who has had the carotid control hold applied, regardless of whether he/she was rendered unconscious, shall be transported by qualified medical personnel to a medical facility. Once the individual has been medically cleared, they shall be transported to an Alameda County jail facility for booking, if they are in custody.
- (e) The officer shall inform any person receiving custody, or any person placed in a position of providing care, that the individual has been subjected to the carotid control hold and whether the subject lost consciousness as a result.
- (f) Any officer attempting or applying the carotid control hold shall promptly notify a supervisor of the use or attempted use of such hold.
- (g) The use or attempted use of the carotid control hold shall be thoroughly documented by the officer in any related reports.

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300.3.5 USE OF FORCE TO SEIZE EVIDENCE

In general, officers may use reasonable force to lawfully seize evidence and to prevent the destruction of evidence. However, officers are discouraged from using force solely to prevent a person from swallowing evidence or contraband. In the instance when force is used, officers should not intentionally use any technique that restricts blood flow to the head, restricts respiration or which creates a reasonable likelihood that blood flow to the head or respiration would be restricted. Officers are encouraged to use techniques and methods taught by the San Leandro Police Department for this specific purpose.

300.4 DEADLY FORCE APPLICATIONS

Use of deadly force is justified in the following circumstances:

- (a) An officer may use deadly force to protect him/herself or others from what he/she reasonably believes would be an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury.
- (b) An officer may use deadly force to stop a fleeing subject when the officer has probable cause to believe that the person has committed, or intends to commit, a felony involving the infliction or threatened infliction of serious bodily injury or death, and the officer reasonably believes that there is an imminent risk of serious bodily injury or death to any other person if the subject is not immediately apprehended. Under such circumstances, a verbal warning should precede the use of deadly force, where feasible.

Imminent does not mean immediate or instantaneous. An imminent danger may exist even if the suspect is not at that very moment pointing a weapon at someone. For example, an imminent danger may exist if an officer reasonably believes any of the following:

- 1. The person has a weapon or is attempting to access one and it is reasonable to believe the person intends to use it against the officer or another.
- 2. The person is capable of causing serious bodily injury or death without a weapon and it is reasonable to believe the person intends to do so.

300.4.1 SHOOTING AT OR FROM MOVING VEHICLES

Shots fired at or from a moving vehicle are rarely effective and may significantly increase the risk of serious bodily injury or death to others including the officers. Officers should try and move out of the path of an approaching vehicle instead of discharging their firearm at the vehicle or any of its occupants.

An officer should only discharge a firearm at a moving vehicle or its occupants when:

- (a) The officer reasonably believes there are no other reasonable means available to avert the deadly force threat of the vehicle due to the driver operating the vehicle in a manner that presents an imminent threat of death or great bodily injury to the officer, other officers or the public in the immediate area; or

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- (b) If deadly force other than the vehicle is directed at the officer or others, such as the driver or occupants are firing at the officers.

Officers should not shoot at any part of a vehicle in an attempt to disable the vehicle.

300.5 REPORTING THE USE OF FORCE

Any use of force by a member of this department shall be documented promptly, completely and accurately in an appropriate report, depending on the nature of the incident. The officer should articulate the factors perceived and why he/she believed the use of force was reasonable under the circumstances. To collect data for purposes of training, resource allocation, analysis and related purposes, the Department requires the completion of a use of force review in certain incidents. Based on circumstances, a supervisor may direct an uninvolved officer to complete a police report.

300.5.1 NOTIFICATION TO SUPERVISORS

Supervisory notification that requires a use of force review shall be made as soon as practicable following the application of deadly force and in any of the following circumstances:

- (a) The application caused a visible injury;
- (b) The application, or attempted application of the Carotid Control Hold;
- (c) The individual subjected to the force complained of injury or continuing pain;
- (d) The individual indicates intent to pursue litigation;
- (e) Any less lethal deployment, including a TASER device or OC spray (even if the subject was not hit);
- (f) Any application of a restraint device other than handcuffs, shackles or belly chains;
- (g) The individual subjected to the force was rendered unconscious;
- (h) An individual was struck or kicked by any means, including impact weapons
- (i) Any maneuver that results in a subject being taken down to the ground (regardless of injury);
- (j) K-9 bites;
- (k) An individual alleges any of the above has occurred.

Additional situations that require supervisory notification and documentation in an officer's report:

Whenever an individual arrested by a member of this Department has received an obviously recent injury, and it has been clearly determined the injury occurred solely as a result of an incident prior to police contact (accidents, injuries inflicted by other parties, etc.);

Whenever an individual arrested or detained by this Department has received an injury while in police custody which is not a result of the application of force. This would include persons whose injuries are a result of tripping, resistance to handcuffing, restraints, or who injury themselves during resistive behavior while confined within police vehicles or interview rooms.

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300.5.2 REPORTING TO CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The Professional Standards and Training Unit or the authorized designee shall ensure that data required by the Department of Justice (DOJ) regarding all officer-involved shootings and incidents involving use of force resulting in serious bodily injury is collected and forwarded to the DOJ as required by Government Code § 12525.2.

300.6 MEDICAL CONSIDERATION

Prior to booking or release, medical assistance shall be obtained for any person who exhibits signs of physical distress, who has sustained visible injury, expresses a complaint of injury or continuing pain, or who was rendered unconscious. Any individual exhibiting signs of physical distress after an encounter should be continuously monitored until he/she can be medically assessed.

Based upon the officer's initial assessment of the nature and extent of the subject's injuries, medical assistance may consist of examination by fire personnel, paramedics, hospital staff or medical staff at the jail. If any individual refuses medical attention, whether on scene or at a medical facility, such refusal shall be witnessed by medical personnel and shall be fully documented in related reports and captured on PVRs. Photographs of injuries, or lack of injuries, shall be taken.

The on-scene supervisor or, if the on-scene supervisor is not available, the primary handling officer shall ensure that any person providing medical care or receiving custody of a person following any use of force is informed that the person was subjected to force. This notification shall include a description of the force used and any other circumstances the officer reasonably believes would be potential safety or medical risks to the subject (e.g., prolonged struggle, extreme agitation, impaired respiration).

Persons who exhibit extreme agitation, violent irrational behavior accompanied by profuse sweating, extraordinary strength beyond their physical characteristics and imperviousness to pain (sometimes called "excited delirium"), or who require a protracted physical encounter with multiple officers to be brought under control, may be at an increased risk of sudden death. Calls involving these persons should be considered medical emergencies. Officers who reasonably suspect a medical emergency shall request medical assistance as soon as practicable and have medical personnel stage away if appropriate.

All individuals who have been medically cleared at a hospital shall be transported to an Alameda County jail facility for booking, if warranted. For investigative purposes, if after an individual has been medically cleared at a hospital, a Watch Commander may authorize for that individual to be transported to the San Leandro Police Department jail facility.

300.7 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

Supervisors shall respond to an incident in which there has been a reported application of force that requires a use of force review, and shall:

- (a) Obtain the basic facts from the involved officers. Absent an allegation of misconduct or excessive force, this will be considered a routine contact in the normal course of duties.

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- (b) Ensure that any injured parties are examined and treated.
- (c) Separately obtain a recorded interview with the subject upon whom force was applied. If this interview is conducted without the person having voluntarily waived his/her *Miranda* rights, the following shall apply:
 - 1. The content of the interview should not be summarized or included in any related criminal charges.
 - 2. The fact that a recorded interview was conducted should be documented in a property or other report.
 - 3. The recording of the interview should be distinctly tagged for retention until all potential for civil litigation has expired.
- (d) Once any initial medical assessment has been completed or first aid has been rendered, ensure that photographs have been taken of any areas involving visible injury or complaint of pain, as well as overall photographs of uninjured areas. These photographs should be retained until all potential for civil litigation has expired.
- (e) Identify any witnesses not already included in related reports.
- (f) Review and approve all related reports.
- (g) Determine if there is any indication that the subject may pursue civil litigation.
 - 1. If there is an indication of potential civil litigation, the supervisor should complete and route a notification of a potential claim through the appropriate channels.
- (h) Review any PVRs footage of the incident.
- (i) Unless directed otherwise by the Bureau of Operations Captain, submit within 7 days to the Watch Commander, a post-review and analysis of the use of force to ensure the use of force was within policy any identified issue(s).
- (j) Initiate an administrative investigation if there is a question of policy non-compliance or if for any reason further investigation may be appropriate.

In the event that a supervisor is unable to respond to the scene of an incident involving the reported application of force, the supervisor is still expected to complete as many of the above items as circumstances permit and document the reason they could not respond.

300.7.1 WATCH COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITY

The Watch Commander shall review all pertinent reports to ensure compliance and forward to the Bureau of Operations Captain within 14 days of occurrence.

300.8 TRAINING

Officers will receive periodic training on this policy and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

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300.9 USE OF FORCE ANALYSIS

At least annually, the Bureau of Services Captain should prepare an analysis report on use of force incidents. The report should be submitted to the Chief of Police. The report should not contain the names of officers, suspects or case numbers, and should include:

- (a) The identification of any trends in the use of force by members.
- (b) Training needs recommendations.
- (c) Equipment needs recommendations.
- (d) Policy revision recommendations.

300.10 RESCINDED POLICY

This policy rescinds San Leandro Operation Directives 87-26 and 87-39.